

as an economically stable and culturally vibrant community. Harlem CDC targets the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized commercial and residential property and publicly-owned spaces (www.harlemcdc.org).

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me in recognition of the 2011 "BID on Culture" Winning Banners and in celebration of Black Music Month.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 23, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2219) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the Fiscal Year 2012 Defense Appropriations bill. Ensuring that our military receives funding for the coming fiscal year is an essential duty of this Congress and key to maintaining the capabilities of our Armed Forces. I applaud the work of the subcommittee and full committee for considering this legislation in regular order. I also give credit to my colleagues on the Rules Committee for ensuring that the House has once again returned to the days of open rules on appropriations bills, so every Member's voice can be heard.

Furthermore, it is with the utmost appreciation that I commend the Appropriations Committee for working in partnership with the Armed Services Committee on matters relating to our military. As Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, I remain fully committed to providing our troops with the resources needed to fulfill their missions. To that end, I am pleased to see that this bill provides the full amount of funding requested by the President for fiscal year 2012 to fund Overseas Contingency Operations, which is essential to achieving victory in ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, I do have reservations about the cut to the defense base budget during a time when we are engaged in several overseas conflicts and facing an abundance of emerging threats to our security. Despite the fact that our nation's heroes got Osama bin Laden, we are still a nation at war—a war that we did not start. Al Qaeda has named bin Laden's successor and there is no doubt in anyone's mind that their primary goal is to kill Americans.

I recognize that on a percentage basis, an \$8.9 billion cut may not seem significant—less than two percent. But two percent is the same amount Secretary Gates has been trying desperately to find through efficiencies to reinvest in our force structure and modernization accounts. We have applauded his efforts and supported his goal. Now, unfortunately, this bill would take those dollars away.

Nevertheless, it is clear that we are experiencing a fiscal crisis due to excessive government spending. I fully support ongoing efforts to responsibly cut excess spending to put our nation on the path to economic recovery and lasting prosperity. There are larger battles

looming in the days ahead, in which we must tackle monumental issues such as the nation's debt ceiling. This is where our focus must be. I urge my colleagues to stand united as we move forward to ensure that we do not lower military spending to a level which threatens the safety of American citizens. To do so would be an investment in the decline of our national security.

Once again, I thank my colleagues for bringing this bill to the floor. I believe this bill strikes a reasonable balance of fiscal responsibility and providing for our armed services, and will therefore oppose amendments that would further reduce the resources available for our men and women in uniform and their families. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of this bill.

A TRIBUTE TO BENJAMIN J.
BUFFINGTON

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2011

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Benjamin James Buffington for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Eagle Scout rank is the highest advancement rank in scouting. Only about five percent of Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award. The award is a performance based achievement whose standards have been well-maintained over the years.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout is obligated to pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges, as well as completing an Eagle Project to benefit the community. Benjamin's project was to work with other troop members to construct a three tier fence that will help develop an outdoor horse arena for Harmony Ranch in Clear Lake, Iowa. Harmony Ranch is a faith-based organization that provides therapeutic horseback riding ministry for individuals with disabilities. When the project was finished Benjamin's fence enclosed a 100 foot by 200 foot area to provide the much needed riding area.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication and perseverance. Benjamin's efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent him and his family in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues will join me in congratulating him on achieving an Eagle Scout ranking and will wish him continued success in his future education and career.

CELEBRATION OF CARIBBEAN
AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2011

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, as the month of June draws to a close, I rise to recognize the celebration of Caribbean American Heritage Month. The past, present and future of the Caribbean is closely associated with that of this country, as our islands exist be-

tween two great continents and are affected by the social, economic and political decisions that are made by our neighbors to the north and to the south. The Caribbean, and Caribbean Americans were there at the founding of this great country and continue to be a part of its evolution into the 21st century.

As it relates to the territory that I represent, the U.S. Virgin Islands, from the rum trade that helped to fund the American Revolution, to the first salute of the colors of the newly declared nation to being the place where the young Alexander Hamilton spent his formative years, our contributions to the American story are well documented. Less known, is that our territory was purchased from Denmark almost 100 years ago in conjunction with the building of the Panama Canal as a means to defend that and other American interests in the region. Also less known are the contributions of our citizens who left the islands to live in this great nation and to contribute as average citizens who are teachers, doctors, and businessmen, and as standouts in the Harlem Renaissance and the civil rights movement in this country. The Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean have contributed and continue to contribute soldiers, historians, activists, legislators and yes, Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this year, the Institute of Caribbean Studies led by the indomitable Dr. Claire Nelson has recognized Members of Congress of Caribbean American Heritage who served in the past and who serve now. In addition to myself, the Honorable BARBARA LEE, the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON LEE, the Honorable YVETTE CLARKE and the Honorable FREDERICA WILSON who proudly serve now, they also recognized former Members, the Honorable Mervyn Dymally and the late, great Shirley Chisholm. Caribbean American members continue to serve this country in every walk of life in entertainment, in law, in finance, in economic development. The countries in the Caribbean Basin continue to be friends and allies of our great nation. It is only fitting that Caribbean American Heritage be a relationship that is honored and recognized on an annual basis.

CONGRATULATING THE ST. CLAIR
HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAM
ON WINNING THE MICHIGAN
DIVISION II STATE TITLE

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2011

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct privilege to recognize a special achievement recently accomplished by the St. Clair High School Saints Baseball Team. St. Clair capped off a remarkable and extremely memorable 2011 season by taking home the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Division II Team State Title! Forty-Eight years have passed since St. Clair won their last state high school championship which was in boys' gymnastics, so this was truly a time for celebration and jubilee. The St. Clair High School Baseball Team exhibited true-grit, determination and solidarity to reach the pinnacle of this historic season.

With "Skipper" Bill McElreath leading the charge, the Saints played strong fundamental